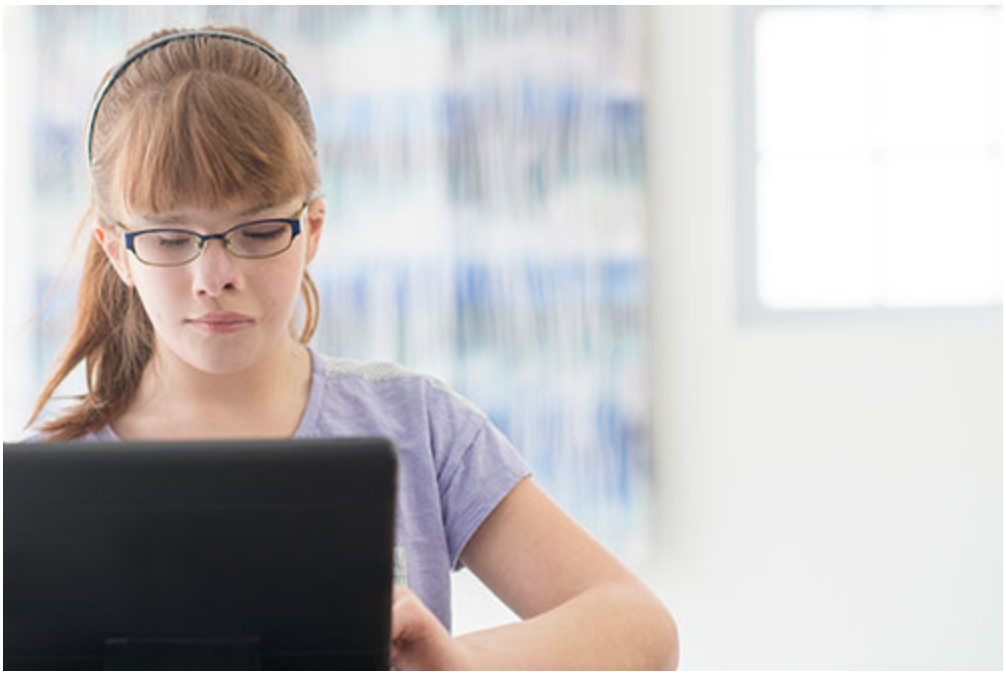
Accommodations Toolkit

Large Print: Research

This fact sheet on **large print** is part of the *Accommodations Toolkit* published by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). It summarizes information and research findings on large print as an accommodation.[1] The toolkit also contains a summary of states' accessibility policies for large print (/nceo/accommodations-toolkit/large-print-policies).



What is large print? Large print is a presentation accommodation where the font size is bigger than a standard exam font size. Large print is typically used for paper tests because a student cannot access or see the material in its original format (Bolt & Ysseldyke, 2008).

What are the research findings on who should use this accommodation? Research has shown students with visual impairments (Ferrell et al., 2017; Fox, 2012) and students with learning disabilities (Cook et al., 2010; Ferrell et al., 2017; Fuchs et al, 2000; Tavani, 2004) have used large print. However, the students who benefited most from using large print on assessments were students with visual impairments (Ferrell et al., 2017).

- One study found that third through eighth grade students with visual impairments who read print scored better on large print versions of English language arts, science, and mathematics paper tests than similar students who took standard print versions of the tests (Ferrell et al., 2017).
- Two studies (Cook et al., 2010; Fuchs et al., 2000) compared the performance of students with learning disabilities who took large print paper exams to students without disabilities who took standard print paper exams. Fuchs et al. (2000) examined the performance of elementary grade students on a reading assessment while Cook et al. (2000) examined elementary grade students on an English language arts assessment. Both studies found that large print did not improve the performance of students with learning disabilities.
- Two studies (Fox, 2012; Tavani, 2004) examined the frequency of use of large print. One study examined third through eighth grade students with visual impairments using paper exams for reading and math (Fox, 2012). Another study examined fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students with learning disabilities using paper exams for math (Tavani, 2004). Both studies found that large print was one of the most frequently allowed presentation accommodations across different states on exams.

What perceptions do students and teachers have about large print? Two studies touched on students' perceptions of the large print accommodation.

- One study found that high school students with visual impairments preferred large print paper exams over audio forms of exams because they could read at their own pace (Erin et al., 2006).
- One study compared the perceptions of secondary students with visual impairments regarding large print, magnification, and no accommodation. The study found that the students preferred to use either computerized magnification or a paper exam with the large print accommodations over no accommodation (McLaughlin & Kamei-Hannan, 2018).

What have we learned overall? Research has shown that there is some benefit for students with visual impairments when they use large print over standard print on paper exams. It is unclear whether students with learning disabilities, specifically with those with print disabilities, benefit from the use of large print. Secondary students with visual impairments prefer to use large print exams as compared to no accommodation. However, further research on the effects of large print on student performance is needed. No research was found that examined teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the large print accommodation, and there is a particular need for research in this area. There is also a need for additional research on whether large print is useful for students who have disabilities other than visual impairments (e.g., LD).

Footnotes

[1]

Research on large print summarized here is also available in NCEO's searchable *Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Bibliography* (https://nceo.info/Resources/bibliographies):/nceo.info/Resources/bibliographies (https://nceo.info/Resources/bibliographies)) and in NCEO syntheses of research from 1999 through 2018 (see summaries for: 1999-2001 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/TechReport34.pdf), 2002-2004 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech45/Technical45.pdf), 2005-2006 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech47/TechReport47.pdf), 2007-2008 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech56/TechnicalReport56.pdf), 2009-2010 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech65/TechnicalReport65.pdf), 2011-2012 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Synthesis94/Synthesis94.pdf), 2013-2014 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Report402/NCEOReport402.pdf), 2015-2016 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport412.pdf), 2017 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport418.pdf), 2018 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport423.pdf), 2019 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport433.pdf). See the reports and online bibliography for additional information about the criteria used to identify studies included in this fact sheet.

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